

Appln. No. 10/771,883
Amendment dated June 19, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed December 19, 2006

REMARKS

Attorney for applicant has carefully reviewed the outstanding Office Action on the present application. Applicant has amended Claims 3, 4, 7-12, 14, 15, 19, and 50-72. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 13, 16-18, and 20-49 are canceled.

The December 19th Office Action has been made final. In such circumstances, a Request for Continued Examination ("RCE") is enclosed herewith to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Applicant's attorney is pleased to note that, at page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that Claims 9, 19, 55, and 66 contain allowable subject matter. By the foregoing amendments, each of these claims has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its respective base claim. More particularly, Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its base claim (i.e., Claim 1), while Claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its base claim (i.e., Claim 18). Additionally, Claim 55 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its base claim (i.e., Claim 16), while Claim 66 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its base claim (i.e., Claim 18). In such circumstances, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 9, 19, 55, and 66 are in condition for allowance.

With respect to Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, and 50, they have been amended so as to now depend from amended Claim 9. Similarly, Claims 62-65 and 67-72

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have been amended so as to now depend from amended Claim 19, while Claims 51-54 and 56-61 have been amended so as to now depend from amended Claim 55. In such circumstances, it is believed that all of these dependent claims are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14-18, 20, 21, 50-54, 56-65, and 67-72 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Japanese '999 application. This rejection has been obviated by the cancellation herein of Claims 1, 2, 16-18, 20, and 21, and the amendment to Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 50-54, 56-65, and 67-72. Claims 1, 2, 16-18, 20, and 21 have been canceled to expedite issuance of a patent. Applicant makes no admissions concerning the propriety of the rejections and respectfully disagrees with same. Applicant reserves the right to file continuation applications to protect the inventions of the canceled claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant's attorney respectfully requests reexamination and allowance of pending Claims 3, 4, 7-12, 14, 15, 19, and 50-72. If such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is cordially invited to place a telephone call to applicant's attorney in order that any outstanding issue may be resolved without the issuance of a further Office Action.

Enclosed is a Petition for a three-month extension of time to and including June 19, 2007. Also enclosed is a Request for Continued Examination Transmittal Form which authorizes payment of the RCE filing fee. If there are any additional fees due as a result of this Amendment, including extension and petition fees, the Examiner is authorized

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to charge them to Deposit Account No. 503571.

Applicant's attorney attests that he is authorized to act in a representative capacity in connection with the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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